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HISTORIAN



OF HANCOCK COUNTY

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Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi

May 2024

COMING EVENTS AT LOBRANO HOUSE

The monthly luncheon meeting will be held on Thursday, May 16, 2024, at noon at the Kate Lobrano House. The guest speaker will be Bert Young, a member of the Hancock County Historical Society Board of Directors. He will speak on the cotton industry. Reservations may be made by calling 228-467-4090. **Please call by noon on Wednesday, May 15** to make your reservation. Seating is limited to forty-eight (48) people, and we need to order the correct number of lunches. **Served at noon, lunch is \$15.00 for members and \$17.00 for nonmembers**, payable at the door. The catering order is submitted on Wednesday at noon prior to the luncheon on Thursday. If you need to cancel your reservation, please call by noon on Wednesday prior to the luncheon if at all possible so that the society does not incur unnecessary expenses. It is catered by Almost Home Catering with Chef Michelle Nichols. The lunch menu is meatloaf with brown gravy, parsley potatoes, spinach au gratin, yeast rolls, pecan praline bread pudding.



US Navy bosun's mate, Ashton Carver, served in the Vietnam War from 1962-1964. In 1965 he was in the Merchant Marine as an able-bodied seaman. His ship, the *USS Croatan*, delivered war materiel to all the major ports in Vietnam. When in port the *USS Croatan* was constantly at risk of sabotage by the Viet Cong.

VIETNAM WAR II

By
James Keating, M.D.

The United States Navy played a critical role in the Vietnam War, supporting the Marine Divisions in the northern two sections of South Vietnam. The carriers in the Gulf of Tonkin provided fighter jets and other aircraft to support the 600,000 military soldiers on the ground. The United States provided an immense supply chain of munitions, men, and materiel for this campaign. The US Navy and the Merchant Marine carried this support in their respective vessels. One able-

bodied seaman from Hancock County, Ashton Carver, served in both services and represents a Veteran of a Foreign War on both counts.

Ashton Carver was born in 1941 in Waveland, MS, delivered by a midwife. His father, Allen Carver (1909-1955), was born in the family home on St. Charles Street. Allen worked as a welder at the Delta and Higgins Shipyards in New Orleans. There have been five generations of the Carver Family in the Bay-Waveland community. Ashton's mother was Florence Carver Carver (1914-1976). Ashton went to Waveland Grammar School and graduated from Bay High School in 1960. In 1961

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Closed: 12:00—1:00 (lunch)

MISSION STATEMENT

"TO PRESERVE THE GENERAL AND ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY OF HANCOCK COUNTY AND TO PRESERVE THE KATE LOBRANO HOUSE AND COLLECTIONS THEREIN; TO RESEARCH AND INTERPRET LIFE IN HANCOCK COUNTY; AND TO ENCOURAGE AN APPRECIATION OF AND INTEREST IN HISTORICAL PRESERVATION."

Ashton entered the US Navy as a bosun's mate. He did maintenance and manned guns. He served in the Gulf of Tonkin on a tanker ship in the *USS Tolovana* from 1962-1964. His tanker refueled many gunships that supported the USAF and the US Army. When the Gulf of Tonkin incident occurred, Ashton was in Japan, and the *Tolovana* left immediately in the middle of the night because of this emergency and commencement of war between the United States and North Vietnam. Ashton spent a lot of time at sea in this period and the *Tolovana* fueled over one hundred ships in the six months he was in the Gulf War Zone.

Ashton returned stateside and served in the Naval Reserve until 1965 when he became a Merchant Seaman, Port of Embarkation New Orleans. His ship was an old World War II US Navy aircraft carrier, *USS Croatan*. Merchant Marine vessels fell under the command of the Military Sea Transportation Service (MSTS) during the Vietnam War, and it was up to the MSTS to deliver war materi-



Ashton Carver married Tula Mitchell in 1974. Tula was a teacher for thirty-one years. She then worked as a secretary employed by the Mississippi Extension Service.

el and other supplies to its four customers: Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps. Their ships were staffed with civilians, but delivered critical supplies including ordinance and ammunition into live combat zones under fire. There were 140 enemy actions against these ships resulting in sixteen deaths and four dozen wounded casualties. MSTS carried guns, tanks, trucks, trains, riverboats, barges, helicopters, bombers, fighters, reconnaissance planes, food,

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

May 7, 1915—The British passenger ship *Lusitania* was torpedoed by a German submarine off the coast of Ireland, losing 1,198 of its 1,924 passengers, including 114 Americans. The attack hastened neutral American's enter into World War 1.

The international scene of the late eighteen hundreds and early nineteen hundreds was at a pivotal point with advances in technology such as the electrification of major cities and invention of the Diesel engine. The Diesel engine allowed Germany to greatly expand its naval fleet, especially submarines, and emboldened Kaiser Wilhelm II to unite Germany in support of his plan for the conquest of Europe.

The Mysterious case of Rudolf Diesel by Douglas Brunt with a biography of Rudolf Diesel includes insights into the relationships between the major industrialists of the time such as John D. Rockefeller, August Bush, and Thomas Edison, as well as the political intrigue among England, France, Spain, Prussia, Russia, and Persia.

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Ashton Carver served in the US Navy aboard the tanker, *Tolovana*, that fueled over one hundred military gun boats in the Gulf Tonkin during deployment in the Vietnam War earning him and his ship combat campaign ribbons.

fuel, and medical supplies. By 1965 MSTs had 300 freighters and tankers supplying Vietnam with an average of 75 ships and over 3,000 merchant marines in Vietnamese ports at one time.

Ashton remembers when the *USS Croatan* would dock in Saigon, they would tow the *Skyraider* airplanes with their wings up down the streets of that city in the middle of the night to the local airbase. At that time there was a strict curfew. Anyone seen on the street was considered Cong and was shot on

site. Fear of sabotage by the Viet Cong necessitated the placement of barbed wire in the water around the ship in harbor. In addition, percussion bombs were detonated every fifteen minutes to discourage Cong frogmen from attaching explosives to his carrier's hull. The *USS Croatan* went to many ports in Vietnam such as Saigon, Cam Rand, and Danang.

Around 1967 Aston worked for Tidewater Marine Services for seven years as a seaman in Offshore Vessels

(OSV'S) supporting the offshore oil exploration rigs until 1985. He then worked at the Stennis Space Center as a painter and retired in 2024. Ashton married Tula Mitchell (b. 1945) in 1974. Tula's father was Alson "Tony" Mitchell (1918-1963), who came from Covington County, and was in the Marine Corps during World War II. Her mother was Agnes

Ainsworth (1917-2001) from Jones County. Agnes was a teacher. Tula also was a teacher for thirty-one years. She then worked as a secretary employed by the Mississippi Extension Service. They conduct soil testing, animal support, investigate dying trees, and support 4-H Clubs for youths.

Another local patriot from Steep Hollow is an army Veteran of a Foreign War, Dubois Ladner, who was born in Poplarville in 1949. He attended Savannah School through the seventh grade and graduated from Poplarville High School in 1967. In 1968 Dubois entered the US Army and served in Vietnam from 1969-1970. Dubois repaired Chinook helicopters and was sent on supply, evacuation, and combat missions in his helicopters. After his tour of duty in Vietnam, he was stationed in Fort Rucker, Alabama. Later, Dubois went to Mechanics School and learned how to be a welder. Subsequently, he found good employment at the Stennis Space Center working for the Cuevas Machine Company. Dubois is active in the Veterans of Foreign Wars club in Lakeshore. Incidentally, the neighborhood where Dubois lives, Steep Hollow, boasts of

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Diesel visited American several times to meet with August Bush who in addition to his brewing empire bought the franchise to build and supply Diesel engines in the United States. Following are Diesel's observations about the American people.

"There are four American virtues which I believe basic.

Absent of any durable fixed classes. Your poor and rich classes are quite readily interchangeable.

The distribution of intelligence and charity among everyday Americans is very fair and generous.

A great respect for American inventive talent, also exceptionally well distributed among all kinds of workers.

Finally, the modesty of important Americans invites more of its kind."

Chris Roth
President



The soldiers in this photo were part of the US Army 11th Aviation Battalion. These twelve men were stationed Phu Loi, Vietnam, in 1970 at a Chinook helicopter airbase near the Cambodian border. The men were positioned in front of a wall of sandbags protecting a shell bunker. Half of the soldiers in this picture were killed in combat. Dubois Ladner is the person standing

sixty-one veteran patriots who have served their country in uniform during the last one hundred years in the several wars in which the USA has been involved.

During the Vietnam War, the United States Air Force participated in air combat over North Vietnam from 1965-1972. Flight Surgeon Captain James Keating, MD, was not deployed to Vietnam, during his service from 1971-1973. Keating was stationed at Dover AFB in Delaware attached to the 95th Fighter Interceptor Squadron where he flew in the "back seat" of the F 106 *Delta Dart* and the T-33 *T-Bird*. His service with the twenty-five fighter pilots and conversations with fighter pilots after the war provided valuable insight about the experiences of fighter pilots and some interesting history of the USAF contribution to the Vietnam War for this article.

The USAF during the

Vietnam War suffered from competition and rivalry between the Strategic Air Command (SAC) and the Tactical Air Command (TAC) for resources, strategy, and tactics. Fighter pilot training before and during the war was subpar and suffered because of SAC (bombers) culture of "flight safe-

ty" in pilot training rather than honing skills to fly high performance jets crucial to air-to-air combat in a "dogfight." The TAC (fighter jets) abandoned the classic role of tactical air power, air-to-air combat, and conventional weapons (machine guns). It was believed that old fashioned dogfights were obsolete, and in future encounters enemy planes would duel with only long-range guided missiles. Consequently, the F-4 fighter jets had its original internal cannons (machine guns) replaced with *Sidewinder* air-to-air missiles.

North Vietnam's MiG-17's were small and more maneuverable and proved more difficult than the Air Force and Navy expected. The *Sidewinder* missiles did not have a "Pk" (probability to kill) ratio in a "turn and burn" encounter in the dogfight of any better than 10%. Consequently, Air Force crews were forced to innovate for their combat pilots and mount machine guns on their F-4's. This resulted immediately in shooting down of several MiG's which fortunately resulted in the USAF approving the modifica-



Flight Surgeon Captain James Keating, M.D. flew in the back seat of this T-33 "T-Bird" with his fighter pilots in the 95th Fighter Interceptor Squadron in 1971, call sign "Fighter Doc."

tion.

The Navy established the Navy Fighter Weapons School (Top Gun) in 1969. It was not until after the war in 1974 that the USAF decided to retrain all their fighter pilots in air-to-air combat tactics or dogfight. The 95th Fighter Interceptor Squadron was transferred to Tyndall AFB in Florida to support this training group. These pilots had great skills and experience in the *Delta Darts* and *T-Birds* that made excellent mock MiG opponents in training dogfights for the other F-4 fighter pilots and new recruits.

An excellent history of this subject is Colonel Marshall I. Michel's book, *Clashes: Air Combat Over North Vietnam 1965-1972*. Michel was a F-4 fighter pilot during the Vietnam War who flew 321 combat missions over North Vietnam and Laos. Michel currently resides in Biloxi, Mississippi.

SOURCES:

- Carver, Ashton and Tula. Personal interview, March 22, 2024.
 Ladner, Debois. Personal interview, August 12, 2022.
 Michel, Marshall I. *Clashes: Air Combat Over North Vietnam 1964-1972*. Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1997.
 Michel, Marshall I. Personal interview, July 15, 2022.



The Kate Lobrano House deeded to the Hancock County Historical Society 9-11-88



The Kate Lobrano House
The home of the Hancock County Historical

The following essay was written by Charles Gray to present the home of the Hancock County Historical Society to the Mississippi Department of Archives and History in the early 1990's. Many changes and additions have been made to the Lobrano House and the Historical Society since those early years.

The Kate Lobrano House 108 Cue Street (ca. 1896)

The Katherine Maynard Lobrano house, built about 1896 on the rear lot of the George Maynard Home facing Main Street, was built when Katherine married Frank Lobrano. It was donated to the Hancock County Historical Society in 1988 by her heirs. It is a one gable-on-hip-roofed shotgun cottage with 2-sided undercut gallery and multiple double-leafed entrances onto gallery. It has a rear wing addition construction in 1990.

The original building was of barge-board construction with baton covering the cracks between them. Barge-boards usually were cypress; however the ones in the Lobrano House are heart pine.

Furnishings were donated by society members including the cypress mantle, the 1840 rosewood chair, the brass lamp and the 1870 walnut armoire which were given by Dr. and Mrs. Edward Davidson. The armoire was constructed for

moving, having no permanent fastenings but instead is secured solely by pegs.

The lovely dresses in the armoire were donated by the de Montluzin family. They are the type that were worn by Bay St. Louis ladies for the afternoon social hour when people strolled among the many gazebos which lined the beachfront. Most gazebos were not rebuilt following the hurricane of 1947. These particular dresses date from the turn of the century.

Mrs. Ruth Thompson, our current President, loaned her Mother's childhood rocking chair.

In its present state, the President's Room, contains three computers, a copy machine, and photographic reproduction equipment. Currently, thousands of records are being entered into their memory banks consisting of everything from phone books dating back to 1948, local newspapers back to 1892, social columns from the New Orleans and Gulf Coast newspapers, and the complete records of Historians M. James Stevens and Charles Sullivan. There are also diaries, letters, Bible records, deeds and other legal and social papers supplied by current and former residents.

To the rear is a walk-in vault which was donated by Lykes Steamship Company of New Orleans for security of documents in case of hurricane or fire.



Because termites had taken over, a very small bedroom and the back porch were removed from the house.

The unique folding key to the front door was presented at the dedication of the house by Judge Robert Lobrano, grandson of Katherine Lobrano.

Our volunteer staff is always available to copy and record documents or photographs that you wish to share.



This photo shows the new addition built to replace the termite infiltration. The vault was donated, arrived, and was placed on its foundation at the back of the new addition.



This photo shows the completed second addition, built in 1993.



Yes, there was an old bath tub on the back porch.

June 1988

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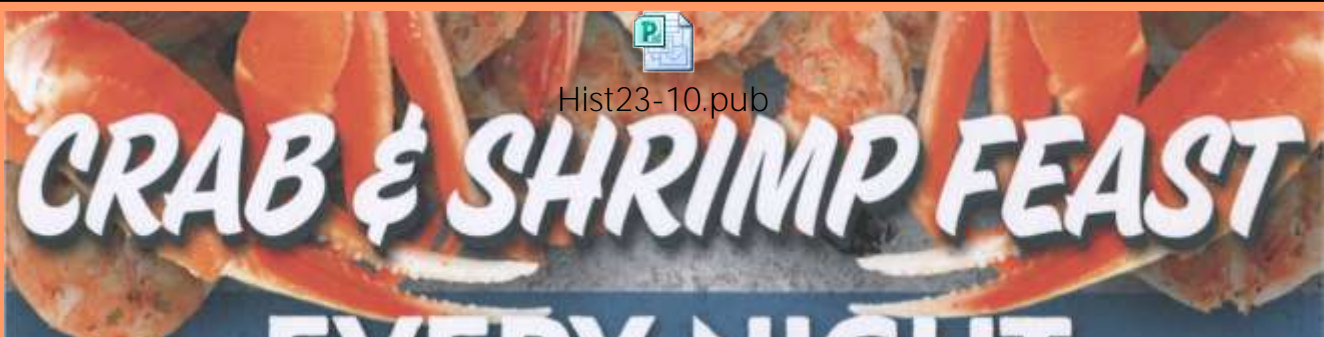
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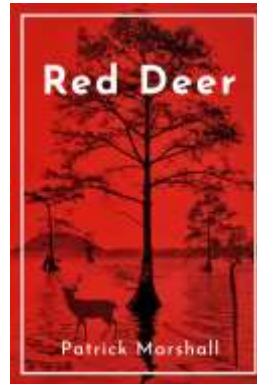
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